

**Statement of Michael D. Brown**  
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**Department of Homeland Security**

**Introduction**

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee. I am Michael Brown, Under Secretary for the Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate (EP&R) of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which includes the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

I am honored to appear before you today to talk about FEMA's accomplishments of this past year since it has become part of the Department of Homeland Security. More importantly I want to highlight our priorities for FY 2004 and why support of the President's Budget request for FY 2005 is critical to insure that FEMA can continue to fulfill its traditional role of preparing for, mitigating against, responding to, and recovering from disasters and emergencies caused by all hazards.

FEMA has undergone significant changes since becoming part of DHS – both external and internal - but it has not changed its focus. As part of DHS, FEMA continues its tradition of responding to help disaster victims and those in need whenever disasters or emergencies strike.

**Transition into the Department of Homeland Security**

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, FEMA celebrated its first full year as part of the Department of Homeland Security. We are proud to be part of this historic effort and are more committed than ever to our duty as defenders of the Homeland. We made significant strides in our first year as a component of the Department, and we continue to see the advantage of and realize benefits from being part of a larger organization. We believe that the Federal-wide consolidation of all-hazards preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery programs brings real benefit to the American public.

Since March 1st of last year, FEMA has worked to merge disaster-related public health programs from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) into a comprehensive and unified national response capability. These programs include the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), which is designed to provide a single, integrated, national medical response capability to augment the Nation's emergency medical response capability when needed for major disasters and Federally declared emergencies. Another important public health-related program, the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS), maintains large quantities of essential medical items that can be provided for the emergency health security of the U.S. in the event of a bioterrorist attack or other public health emergency and to support State and local communities during emergencies.

FEMA also successfully merged a multiplicity of other disaster response teams and assets from different departments and agencies to create a unified national response capability within the Department of Homeland Security. Among these teams and assets, now merged within FEMA's Response Division, are the:

- National Disaster Medical System,
- Domestic Emergency Support Team, and
- Strategic National Stockpile

FEMA has also been given operational control of the Nuclear Incident Response Team in certain circumstances, including the event of an actual or threatened terrorist attack.

As we settle into DHS, we continue to leverage the extensive experience and capabilities of the Department's other components. For example, in responding to Hurricane Isabel, we received aerial imaging and aviation support from our friends at the DHS Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the U.S. Coast Guard. We are partnering with the Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection Directorate to improve our damage prediction and resource placement decisions and to take advantage of their critical infrastructure resources and expertise. We look forward to continuing and increasing such cooperation in the future.

### **FY 2003 Accomplishments**

In Fiscal Year 2003, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) obligated nearly \$2.9 billion in disaster funds to aid people and communities overwhelmed by disasters, including floods, ice and winter storms, wildfires, tornadoes, hurricanes, typhoons, and tropical storms. In addition, FEMA obligated \$6.8 billion to fund projects associated with the September 11 response. Overall, FEMA responded to 62 major disasters and 19 emergencies in 35 States, 4 U.S. Territories and the District of Columbia. These events included the record Midwest tornados, Super Typhoon Pongsona and Hurricanes Claudette and Isabel. The 19 emergencies declared in 2003 included the loss of the Space Shuttle *Columbia*, the President's Day snowstorm, and the Northeast power outages.

While the California fires in October left an indelible mark in our memories, the Nation's fire season in 2003 was not as busy, with exceptions, in Montana and Arizona. But in the areas impacted, the fires were devastating and severe. In Fiscal Year 2003, FEMA approved assistance for 34 fires in 11 States, compared with 83 fires in 19 States in Fiscal Year 2002.

In FY 2003, Congress supported the President's efforts to promote disaster mitigation, through the creation and funding of two important initiatives: the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program and the Flood Map Modernization Program. Great strides have been made in both of these areas in the last year. These two programs will ultimately result in the reduced loss of life and property throughout our Nation.

FEMA's Preparedness Division awarded more than \$160 million in Emergency Management Performance Grants to the States to maintain and improve the national emergency management system. To date, the United States Fire Administration has awarded over \$650 million in grants to fire departments across the nation as part of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. Both of these programs are now requested in the Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) portion of the Department's budget for FY 2005 and we are working very closely with ODP on transferring these programs. FEMA also provided a total of 17 interoperable communications equipment grants for \$79.57 million, and the Emergency Management Institute, the National Fire

Academy (NFA) and the Noble Training Center together trained more than 290,000 fire and emergency management and response personnel nationwide.

In our response to Hurricane Isabel, last September, we demonstrated a more forward-leaning and proactive response posture and made every effort to improve communication, coordination and timely delivery of critical disaster supplies. FEMA increased the frequency of daily video teleconferences with the impacted States and meteorological and river forecasting centers, jointly planned response actions with the States, pre-positioned materials, and opened multiple staging areas and mobilization centers in anticipation of response needs. These and other changes we have made allow us to continue to improve Federal disaster response efforts. We will continue to take advantage of the lessons learned and best practices from Isabel and other disasters, and apply them in our programs to change the impact of future events.

Also during FY 2003, FEMA launched the Continuity of Operations Readiness Reporting System, a single automated system that allows Federal Executive Branch departments and agencies to report the state of their Continuity of Operations capabilities and readiness. The System has been tested and will be fielded this year. In addition to technology upgrades and improvements, FEMA's Office of National Security Coordination maintained a 24/7 operational readiness capability in support of National Security programs, including the initial planning and coordination for an interagency Continuity of Operations exercise, Exercise Forward Challenge 2004, to take place later this year.

### **FY 2004 Priorities**

In Fiscal Year 2004, FEMA is focusing on its five major program areas: Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, Recovery, and National Security.

Our Mitigation efforts center on modernizing our Nation's flood maps, providing Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grants, and enhancing the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). For Map Modernization over 300 mapping projects, valued at approximately \$85 million, were launched nationwide in FY 2003 and we are working with State and local representatives to identify projects for FY 2004. The PDM grants will again provide stable funding to assist State and local governments to reduce risks. The number of NFIP policies will be increased by five percent.

Our Preparedness Division will support the Department's efforts to put into place a National Incident Management System (NIMS) that will help improve coordination of disaster response at all levels. In addition, we will publish Mutual Aid System Development, Credentialing and Equipment Interoperability Standards. Our support for training and exercises continues to enhance the Nation's emergency management capabilities and increasing fire preparedness remains a central mission.

In 2004, our Response capabilities continue to grow. We will field enhanced response teams and resources, improve our response times, put plans into place for catastrophic events, and improve our training. We will continue to consolidate and integrate all of our different disaster response programs, teams, and assets; design new approaches; and implement new efficiencies that will result in a more unified, integrated, and comprehensive approach to all-hazards disaster response. We want to elevate our operational response capabilities to a whole new level of proficiency, one

that will further the principles of the National Response Plan (NRP) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS) to better serve the American people.

For those impacted by disasters, FEMA continues to provide appropriate and effective disaster recovery assistance. Simultaneously, we continue to focus on re-designing our Public Assistance Program and developing a catastrophic incident housing recovery strategy. These efforts will enhance our current capabilities and better position us to recover from a catastrophic event.

Finally, we are ensuring that the FEMA National Security Program has adequately staffed, trained, equipped, and exercised Continuity of Operations (COOP) and Continuity of Government (COG) programs to guarantee the survival of Enduring Constitutional Government.

### **FY 2005 Budget Highlights**

The President's FY 2005 Budget for FEMA:

- Assumes a \$2.9 billion spending level for disaster relief—a level consistent with the average non-terrorist disaster costs over the past five years. This includes more than \$2.1 billion in new disaster funds, as well as funds expected to remain available from prior years. This is over \$300 million more than the FY 2004 appropriation.
- Continues implementation of Project BioShield, which encourages the development and purchase of necessary medical countermeasures against weapons of mass destruction. Through an advance appropriation, \$2.5 billion is made available beginning in FY 2005. These funds will be obligated through FY 2008.
- Includes \$20 million in new budget authority for planning and exercises associated with improving medical surge capabilities.
- Includes \$8 million in new budget authority for four Incident Management Teams (IMTs) to act as the core, field-level response teams for major disasters, emergencies, and acts of terrorism.
- Includes \$7 million in new budget authority for development and implementation of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), specially designed to provide a basic framework of organization, terminology, resource identification and typing; training and credentialing; and communications protocols to deal effectively with incidents of all sizes and complexities involving Federal, State, and local governments, Tribal Nations, and citizens.
- Continues the President's Pre-Disaster Mitigation program, which helps to minimize the devastation caused by natural disasters through a competitive grant process that supports well-designed mitigation projects. In FY 2005, we will initiate post-disaster evaluations to begin documenting losses avoided and assessing program impact.
- Continues the replacement and modernization of the Nation's Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

- Transfers the Strategic National Stockpile to DHHS. As a result of the transfer, \$400 million is moved to DHHS to maintain the stockpile and strengthen its future capacity with new and needed medical products as soon as they become available.
- Transfers the Emergency Food and Shelter Program to the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

## **Mitigation**

FEMA's mitigation programs are an essential part of the Department of Homeland Security's charge to protect the lives and property of Americans from the effects of disasters. Mitigation programs provide us the opportunity not only to develop plans to reduce risks, but more importantly, to implement those plans before disaster strikes.

In previous years, Congress supported the President's efforts to promote disaster mitigation by creating and funding two initiatives:

- Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants, and
- Flood Map Modernization.

The intent of the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants is to provide a consistent source of funding to State, local, and Tribal governments for pre-disaster mitigation planning and projects that primarily address natural hazards. The plans and projects funded by this program reduce overall risks to the populations and structures, while reducing reliance on funds from Federal disaster declarations. The competitive nature of the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program encourages communities to assess their risks, to evaluate their vulnerabilities, and to implement mitigation activities before a disaster strikes. This budget proposes support for both pre-disaster and post-disaster mitigation assistance.

The Flood Map Modernization Program provides the capability to broaden the scope of risk management. This enables more expansive use of the geospatial base data needed to develop the flood maps. Communities, lenders, insurance agents, and others use the maps and the flood data approximately 20 million times a year to make critical decisions on land development, community redevelopment, insurance coverage, and insurance premiums. As flood hazard data is updated, the current flood map inventory is being changed from a paper map system to a digital one. New technology will enhance the usefulness and availability of flood data to all customers. The new system also supports the development and distribution of geospatial data of all hazards, both natural and man-made.

The FY 2005 budget will continue to update flood maps nationwide and increase State and local capability to manage flood hazard data. By the end of FY 2005, digital GIS flood hazard data covering 50 percent of our nation's population will be available online.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) has a significant impact on reducing and indemnifying this Nation's flood losses. Prior to the creation of the NFIP, floodplain management as a practice was not well established, and only a few states and several hundred communities actually regulated floodplain development. Flood insurance was not generally available. We are working diligently to refine and expand our all-hazards risk communication strategy to meet the goal of a 5 percent increase in NFIP policy ownership. This increase in

insurance policy ownership will reduce reliance on the Disaster Relief Fund and will foster individual economic stability.

## **Preparedness**

FEMA's Preparedness Division helps ensure our Nation is prepared to respond to emergencies and disasters of all kinds. The Preparedness Division is responsible for Federal, State, local, and community emergency preparedness programs; assessments and exercises; grants administration; the Radiological Emergency Preparedness Program and the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program.

The U.S. Fire Administration works to prevent fire deaths and damage to property, and carries out its mission through leadership, advocacy, coordination, and support. The training programs offered at the National Fire Academy and the Emergency Management Institute promote the professional development of command level firefighters, emergency managers, and emergency responders, and are an important aspect of the U.S. Fire Administration's duties.

The Noble Training Center, located at Ft. McClellan, Alabama, is a new addition to FEMA. Transferred from DHHS in FY 2003, the Noble Training Center is the only hospital facility in the U.S. devoted entirely to medical training for Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). In FY 2005, Noble will continue to train medical personnel for State and local hospitals, emergency medical services, and the National Disaster Medical System.

In FY 2005, FEMA's Preparedness Division will work with other components of the Department to develop the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the National Response Plan (NRP). These initiatives will ensure that all levels of government, across the Nation, work together efficiently and effectively, employing a single national approach to domestic incident management.

FEMA's Preparedness Division will continue to provide the States with technical assistance in their all-hazards planning. To avoid duplicative planning, our efforts will be closely coordinated with those of the Office for Domestic Preparedness to update State terrorism preparedness plans.

As part of our effort to prepare our citizens for all disasters, the Division will oversee the Community Emergency Response Teams, or CERT. This program, begun as a civilian training program by the Los Angeles Fire Department, has become a nationwide effort to train citizens in first aid and basic firefighting and emergency response techniques. CERT-trained citizens are able to provide those basic emergency services that would otherwise occupy the first responders. FEMA provides train-the-trainer programs to allow as many citizens as possible to receive this training across the country. The CERT program has grown from 170 teams in 28 States and Territories in March of 2002 to over 900 teams in 51 States and Territories.

## **Response**

FEMA's Response Division is responsible for integrating national emergency response teams, systems and assets into a comprehensive and fully coordinated, national capability that supports States and communities in responding to all types of disasters, including acts of terrorism. This is accomplished by arranging the necessary and appropriate national assets, establishing a consolidated national incident response system, and effectively coordinating strategic resources

in full partnership with Federal, State, local, and tribal governments, the private sector, volunteers, and citizen partners.

The FY 2005 Response Division budget proposes to

- Create four Incident Management Teams (IMTs) and formulate plans for full implementation in FY 2006; the IMT is a highly responsive and flexible response team that will be able to quickly establish a strong Federal leadership capability in any disaster environment or high threat situation, including acts of terrorism involving the use of WMD;
- Continue all-hazards catastrophic disaster response planning for one additional US city, based on the pilot disaster planning template developed for New Orleans, Louisiana. The template will be used in the future as a basis for all-hazards catastrophic planning for other high risk areas of the country; and
- Continue efforts to develop the capability to provide intermediate emergency housing aimed at meeting the needs of large numbers of disaster victims displaced from their homes as a result of large scale and catastrophic disasters

FEMA's Response Division will also continue to implement measures to reduce response times for its teams and delivery of disaster supplies.

Additional funding requested in FY 2005 implements the National Incident Management System—NIMS. FEMA's goal for 2005 is to focus on the readiness of Federal response teams and the integration of Federal capabilities with that of State and local jurisdictions. We will conduct outreach to our Federal response partners and State and local counterparts to ensure connectivity and synchronization of response capabilities under NIMS, and will conduct NIMS and Incident Command System (ICS) training for Federal response teams. These activities will ensure we have the baseline skills for all teams to operate under NIMS and be fully integrated into the NIMS/ICS doctrine.

As highlighted previously, the President's FY 2005 budget proposes an initiative to develop FEMA's medical surge capability. Under this initiative, FEMA will evaluate supplemental capabilities for both a fixed and mobile facility to demonstrate the utility of using alternate facilities to support medical surge activities, as well as the utility of having a surge capacity that can be mobilized, transported, and made operational within set timelines. The second part of this initiative is to implement the concept through two pilot projects.

## **Recovery**

FEMA's Recovery Division leads and coordinates the timely delivery of Federal disaster assistance to individuals and communities.

In FY 2005, the Recovery Division will continue to provide assistance to individuals for temporary housing, damaged personal property, crisis counseling, disaster unemployment, and disaster legal services. FEMA responded to over 2.5 million calls last year, from people seeking to register for disaster assistance and to have their questions answered. The Recovery Division processed more than half a million individual disaster applications.

The Individual Assistance Programs that meet victims' most basic needs provide assistance for housing, personal property losses, and medical and funeral expenses. In each disaster we ask our customers, the disaster victims, what they think of the service we provided to them. I am pleased to tell you that we consistently earn very high marks from our customers when they are surveyed. In FY 2005 we will continue to invest in technology that ensures we continue to meet our customers' expectations.

FEMA's Public Assistance Program, which accounts for the bulk of recovery expenditures out of the Disaster Relief Fund, is the primary means for community recovery. State and local governments and certain non-profit organizations can be reimbursed to repair facilities to their pre-disaster condition, as well as for costs associated with debris removal and emergency protective measures. FEMA is focusing on redesigning the Public Assistance Program to be more efficient and better prepared to meet the needs of a catastrophic or terrorist event by moving toward a web-based, user friendly, estimated based program, communities will be able to recover faster. In order to better prepare for the transition to a redesigned program, FEMA is establishing a methodology for estimating the total cost of large projects versus determining final costs after work is complete. Implementing the Public Assistance Program using cost estimates will allow State and local governments to better budget for recovery, improve our estimates of disaster expenditures, and reduce administrative costs and closeout timelines. In addition, we are working on proposed revisions to the Public Assistance Insurance Rule, which was last revised in 1991. The Stafford Act requires applicants for Public Assistance grants to "obtain and maintain" insurance on a damaged facility as a condition of receiving assistance. In the past, there have been concerns about this rule imposing a pre-disaster insurance requirement for all hazards. The proposed rule will not require insurance before disaster strikes, except for flood insurance in identified flood hazard areas, as required by the Stafford Act. The purpose of the rule is to simply clarify issues not adequately addressed in the current rule, such as eligible deductibles.

The Fire Management Assistance Grant Program is another key resource for States and local governments to mitigate, manage, and control forest or grassland fires to prevent damages that may otherwise result in a major disaster declaration.

I assure you that President Bush appreciates the importance of Recovery. I had the honor of joining the President in touring Missouri last spring after the devastating tornadoes struck Pierce City. Even though it was pouring rain during our visit, the President got out of his car to go over and talk to a couple who were standing in front of their damaged store front. They also had damages to their home. Using FEMA's temporary housing, immediate needs assistance, their insurance, and SBA home and business loans, this couple is recovering.

The massive California Wildfires of 2003 scorched over 750,000 acres and claimed 24 lives. During the response to the wildfires, the President and Secretary Ridge wanted me to be intimately involved in the coordination efforts between the Federal agencies doing work there. Through the formation of a pair of interagency bodies, the Washington-based California Fires Coordination Group and the field-level Multi-Agency Support Group, FEMA's Recovery Division was instrumental in assuring that each of our Federal partners was coming to the table with comprehensive plans that were complementary to each other, that minimized the sort of bureaucratic "stove piping" that results in duplication of efforts, and that continued to focus on the needs identified by the state and local communities as priorities. Our shared success is the natural result of FEMA's commitment to "all-hazards" emergency management, and a focus on a



scaled approach to meet the challenges of any kind of incident, from the floods, fires, and storms that happen all too often, to the catastrophic scenarios that we prepare for, but hope will never come to pass.

We take our mission to help communities and citizens recover very seriously. My goal is to continue to do the work we do now better and faster, and to build on our current recovery capabilities to be better prepared to face a catastrophic natural or terrorist event.

## **National Security**

In FY 2005, FEMA's Office of National Security Coordination will continue to carry out its mandated mission to provide Executive Agent leadership to ensure continuity of national operations in response to all-hazard emergencies in order to guarantee the survival of an enduring constitutional government. Funding in FY 2005 will be used to ensure that all Federal Executive Branch departments and agencies attain and maintain a fully operational Continuity of Operations (COOP) capability. FEMA will provide assistance to Federal departments and agencies to help them attain and maintain fully operational contingency capabilities. FEMA will develop and implement a test, training, and exercise program that culminates in a complete exercise of the Continuity of Government (COG) program. In addition, we will provide technical support and guidance to our interagency, regional, State and local stakeholders across the Nation.

## **Conclusion**

During the last year, FEMA has been busy but we continue to carry out our mission to prepare for, mitigate against, respond to, and recover from disasters and emergencies caused by all-hazards. The key to our continued improvement will be to take the lessons learned from previous disasters and incorporate them into our preparedness, planning, and procedures, so that we do an even better job of responding next time. We evaluate the lessons learned from each disaster and make plans to incorporate the new approaches and remedy problems. Hurricane Isabel provided such an opportunity, and it validated our priority to reduce disaster response times and improve our capability to gather information and effectively and efficiently manage the Federal Government's response to Presidentially - declared disasters.

Successful implementation of the new initiatives and the on-going activities I have discussed today will improve our national system of mitigating against, preparing for, responding to, recovering from disasters and emergencies caused by all hazards.

In closing, I want to thank the Members of the Subcommittee for their past support of FEMA and I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today. I would now be pleased to answer any questions you may have.